(d) Mud of suitable specific gravity is used while drilling, and blow out preventer (BOP) is installed over the well head. Monitoring of the operations, inspections, checks and hydraulic tests have been further strengthened.

Dual Pricing Policies

*46. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news items which appeared in the 'Indian Express' dated the 18th February, 1993 to the effect that the decanalisation of petroleum products in the country may lead to black marketing;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to re-examine the policy of dual pricing for petroleum products;

(c) Whether Governmnet are aware that common man would be most affected due to the dual pricing policy;

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) In order to increase the availability of LPG and kerosene in the country in addition to what is available at controlled prices through Public Sector Companies; Government has decided to allow their import and sale at market prices by private agencies. Measures to prevent diversion of lower priced products and black-marketing have been incorporated in the system. Increased supplies in the market will reduce the scope for black marketing.

Recommendations made by Association of State Road Transport Undertaking

*47. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether an annual meeting of State Road Transport Undertakings was held recently at New Delhi;

(b) if so, whether the Association of State Road Transport Undertakings had made several recommendations to the Central Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government propose to accept and implement the recommendations; and

(e) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) An Annual Conference of all State Transport Undertakings was held on 19-3-1993 at New Delhi.

(b) and (c) The Association of State Road Transport Undertakings vide their letter No. ASRTU/1419/265 dated 23-4-1993 have informed the Government that the following recommendations had been made for consideration of various appropriate authorities :—

1. National Tariff Commission should be set so as to advice each State on bus fare Structure based on sound economic factors and scientific criteria so as to cover input costs and also to generate surpluses needed for expansion.

   Decisions connected with periodical fare increases should be taken out of the purview of political decision-making authorities and instead should be based on input cost index.

2. Transport Development Finance Corporations should be established in each State to provide funds for replacement augmentation and expansion of bus services of STUs. This Corporation should provide loans at reasonable rates of interest.

3. Motor Transport Workers Act, Road Transport Corporations Act, Motor Vehicles Act, Industrial Disputes Act, etc. should be corrected by legislative amendments so as to enable them to be modern in outlook for achieving greater efficiency and higher productivity in STUs.

4. State Government should earmark a fixed percentage of Road Taxes collected so as to adequately finance construction of new roads and to maintain and improve the existing roads. Better roads reduces the cost of operation of STU's.

5. State Governments should fully reimburse the costs incurred by STUs on concessional fares to students, physically handicapped, freedom fighters, journalists, etc. which are granted more as a social policy.

6. The Central Government should restore capital contribution to Road Transport Corporations honouring the provisions of RTC's Act without imposing conditions like profitability etc.

7. Recognising the importance of Urban Transport which counstitutes 30% of the total Bus Transport and the sensitive nature of the many issues involved the Ministry of Urban Develpoment should be asked to play a more important and vibrant role in encouraging and financing mass rapid transport systems like light rail transit system, circular railway, bus lanes etc.

8. For meeting the cost towards computerisations depots, inventory ticket issue etc. financial assistance should be given from Government of India or Planning Commission.

9. Financial institutions like IDBI, LIC, Banks should give loans liberally and at lower rate of interest to STUs recognising that the transport is a core sector like Electricity.

10. Chassis manufacturers and Tyre manufacturers should not be allowed to increase their prices unless prior consultation is held with ASRTU/ representative of STUs giving proper justification for the increases sought.

11. The guidelines issued recently by the Planning Commission in which it has been stated that State Transport *Undertakings should make room for* private operators except in places where private operators may not come and that there shall be no expansion of SRTUs : should be immediately withdraw in public interest.

(d) and (e) The recommendations have been received only on 24-4-1993 and all of these require consultation with the State Governments/other Central Ministries. They are under consideration of the Government.

Project for combating blindness in the country

*48. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether a Rs. 550 crore project for boosting eye care lenses and combating blindness in the country is being considered with the assistance of the World Bank; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The proposed Project which is under consideration of the World Bank seeks to increase the number of sight restoring operations in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Orissa through optimal utilisation and augmentation of ophthalmic infrastructure and upgradation of ophthalmic skills to perform high quality